

THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST
COMPANY NUMBER: 7359755

Subject	Meeting of the Board of Directors	Date	15 th July 2020
Room	Via Teams Video Call	Time	5.00pm
Present	Stuart Gardner (SGa), Michael Bailey (MB), Steve Geary (SGe), David Lycett (DL), Peter Martin (PM), Ian Mason (IM), Derek Morrison (DM), Gerard Newman (GN), Linda Randall (LR), Lee Trimby (LT)	Clerk	Sandie Davenport
Apologies accepted	Rachel Jordan-Evans	In attendance	Gwynn Bassan (GB), Kelly Denton (KD), Mandy Gage (MG), Lee Miller (LM), Jody Murphy (JM), Adeola Olagundoye (AO) (observer), Natalie Sheppard (NS)
Non-attendees			

Key Points Discussed and Action Items				
No.	Agenda Item	Action/Discussion	By whom	When
1.	Declaration of business interests	There were no declarations of interest pertaining to items on the agenda.		
2.	Welcome and apologies for absence	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, extending a warm welcome to Adeola Olagundoye from the Kent RGB who was observing the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted retrospectively from Rachel Jordan-Evans.		
3.	Minutes and matters arising	Board meeting 22 nd April 2020 – there were no matters arising and the Chair approved the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Extraordinary Board meeting 17 th June 2020 – there were no matters arising and the Chair approved the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.		
4.	CEO report	SGa gave a presentation on his CEO report to the Board, reminding Directors that they had a legal liability to quality assure and approve the work being done by the Trust.		

Principles for reopening schools in September

- SGa outlined the health and safety obligations of the Trust and its schools towards their employees, pupils and others in the school communities. He outlined the six systems of control: minimise contact with individuals who are unwell, clean hands, ensure good respiratory hygiene, enhanced cleaning, maintain social distancing and, where necessary in special circumstances, wear appropriate PPE.
- The Trust’s overriding principle was “Child First, Child Safe, Adult Safe”, whilst delivering the highest standard of education that it could (“best endeavours”). The Government recognised that there was no totally risk-free way of reopening schools but that schools needed to mitigate that risk. SGa explained that the Trust’s strategy was based on not creating prolonged exposure by taking practical measures to avoid direct close contact and proximity contact.

Keeping students safe

- Hand hygiene will continue around hand-washing and use of hand sanitizer.
- Students will be assigned recreational spaces although different groups will use the same spaces but at different times.
- No large gatherings of students e.g. assemblies.
- PE will take place in the form of non-contact sports e.g. badminton.
- Wrap around care will continue but observing the 1m+ rule.
- Schools will follow Government advice around masks – currently no requirement to wear masks in schools but this may change following the recent announcement that masks must be worn in shops.
- Students will either have assigned areas for learning or will move classrooms which will then be cleaned between classes.
- DSL support will continue as appropriate and schools will look at additional capacity if, as suspected, there is an increase in referrals.
- Music lessons will be allowed if 1m+ distancing can be maintained.

Keeping staff safe

- Social distancing – primary staff who teach a small group of pupils will continue with best endeavours for social distancing as currently (i.e. ensuring the consistency of the group); for secondary staff who engage with a large number of different groups of students during the day, staff will operate within the 1m+ zone (i.e. ensuring the consistency of distancing).
- Masks – staff can wear a visor if they wish (after a discussion with the Headteacher) but not masks so that the children can still see their faces.
- Staff holidays – if staff miss the start of term due to isolating after a foreign holiday, this will be unpaid leave. MB asked if Trade Unions had been consulted about this. LM replied

		<p>that they had and that no issues or concerns had been raised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spaces will be allocated in classrooms for one-to-one EHCP support. • Staff meetings will take place in person, observing the 1m+ social distancing. • LR asked if there were arrangements in place for visually impaired or hearing impaired staff. SGa replied that arrangements would be made in individual cases in conjunction with the Headteacher. Safeguards were already in place for visually and hearing impaired students. <p><u>Keeping the community safe</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External visitors will be allowed but only where essential. Meetings with parents were not considered essential as any communication could be done via phone. DM asked if this included Governor monitoring visits. SGa replied that these were deemed essential albeit it was suggested that no visits should be arranged for the first two weeks of term to enable schools to settle back in. • External trips will only be allowed where essential, e.g. Geography field trips, and must be approved and quality assured by the Director of Education. Any such trips will be highly supervised. • Drop-off and pick-up times will be staggered. • School-based events will only be allowed where essential. No parents evenings. • Agency staff will be allowed if required but schools should consider internal cover first. • Interviewees will be allowed into school as part of the recruitment process. • Office spaces will be reviewed to ensure 1m+ working. Each room will have cleaning materials available. • Lettings will be considered on a case by case basis. <p><u>How will schools work?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1, 2, 6, 11 and 13 provision will be prioritised. • All students will be able to access all specialist provision. • A broad and balanced curriculum will be offered. • Hot meals will be provided if possible. • All students will be in school 5 days per week. • DM asked about the cleaning of recreation spaces. SGa replied that climbing frames and other external equipment would be cleaned more regularly. LM added that the amount of cleaning was being increased in all areas. • There will be a short period before absence procedures are enforced. The Local Authority will be implementing a four week grace period but the Trust feels that one week will be more appropriate as it is important to re-establish routines as soon as possible. • Performance management will resume for staff in September, albeit the October meeting will be a non-judgemental reflection on 2019/20 and target setting for 2020/21. Under- 		
--	--	---	--	--

		<p>performance will be addressed under the competency policy, not the performance management policy, with the latter moving more towards personal growth and development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will have ongoing CPD. <p><u>Distance learning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a single student needs to isolate, the school should use Oak Academy to support home learning as currently. • If a whole year group closes, the school will immediately switch to providing distance learning for that year group. • The Trust’s digital learning strategy has been brought forward by two years and schools are ready for a possible second lockdown. <p><u>Induction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools will have the flexibility to have a staggered reintroduction, with the normal timetable to be in place by 9th September. • Schools will also have flexibly on how they use the two CPD days on 3rd/4th September. <p><u>Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GN asked what measures will be in place for reviewing how the return to school goes? SGa replied that Directors of Education will have fortnightly review meetings with Headteachers, there will be a full review at the end of September and Governors can make monitoring visits after the first two weeks. • DL asked about the catch-up curriculum for Year 11 and Year 13. SGa replied that all students would be assessed in September to identify learning gaps and the catch-up curriculum will focus on the needs of the students. • DM asked about face masks for visitors. SGa replied that they can wear visors rather than face masks. • AO asked about measures in place to support the mental health of staff and students. SGa replied that this will be covered within the induction at each school; staff are supported through the well-being agenda and bespoke support will be identified for any students who need support with their mental health. <p>Primary reopening framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each year group will be a single bubble. Students will have the same teacher, TA and classroom base and will have their own timetable. • Track and Trace will go beyond the Government guidance. If there is a positive case, the student’s bubble will close. SGe asked if pupils from the bubble will stay at school in the 		
--	--	---	--	--

		<p>interim before a positive test. SGa replied that they will.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GN asked about the testing process, who would initiate a test and how the school will know the result of the test. SGa replied that the parents will be responsible for getting a child tested and that, to date, parents had informed schools of the results directly. The school will also be alerted of a positive test through the Track and Trace system. • Lunch will be staggered. • The behaviour management policy has been reviewed with shared expectations and consequences for behaviour for learning and behaviour for safety. • Students who are upset will be comforted within best endeavours under the guidance. • Marking and assessment will continue as normal. • DL asked if supply teachers will be used for short-term illness. SGa replied that schools should endeavour to cover absence internally. If a supply teacher is needed, they will only teach within one year group. • The framework will be an extension of the bubble concept already in place in the Trust's primary schools. JM assured the Board that the bubbles had been operating well for the past 8 weeks and that she was confident in the plans going forward. DM acknowledged that it had worked well so far but asked if this would still be the case when the whole school was back in September. JM replied that it would but that schools would need to be particularly vigilant around parents gathering and chatting. A 10 minute window had been implemented for drop-off and staff will be on duty at the school dates to remind parents to move on. • JM advised the Board that the children who had already come back to school had mostly settled in well. Additional support had been made available to the DSL's. JM reminded Governors that all children, particularly those from deprived backgrounds, need the routine and structure of school; they thrive within boundaries and just want to get back to normal. The schools will work with children on a case by case basis if they need additional support. • JM advised that the Government had announced that day that children going into Year 2 in September would be required to take the phonics check that they will have missed in Year 1. Schools will do other basic assessments in addition to identify learning gaps in the core subjects and reallocate resources as necessary. Some year groups will spend longer in school from September, for example Year 6 will be the first drop-off and the last pick-up so will benefit from an extra 40 minutes in school. <p>Secondary reopening framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGa noted that reopening secondary schools will be a particular challenge as they currently have Year 10 and Year 12 in one day per week but will have to get all students in from September. He thanked Mr Bassan, Ms Gage and Ms Sheppard for their hard work in 		
--	--	--	--	--

		<p>developing the reopening plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will move around different classrooms, with teachers being in a base classroom as they had been before Covid-19. This is not the typical way that most schools will be operating (with children staying in one place and the teachers moving around) but the Trust feels that this is best for the students as they will be able to access speciality teaching areas such as science labs. • Lessons will move to 3 x 1 hour 40 minute lessons per day to minimise student movement. DL asked if teaching and learning will need to change as a result of the longer lessons. SGa replied that CPD in September will focus on how to manage the longer lessons using a wider range of activities along with clear markers for learning during lessons. MG added that work on this is being based around three areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching: what will this look like? Focus on improving literacy across all subjects. - Engagement: range of tasks. - Behaviour management: clear expectations of student behaviour; ensuring staffing are prepared for challenge. <p>SGa asked about particular arrangements at Goodwin. GB replied that the school will use a Purple Zone approach whereby pupils work in silence for 20 minutes for the most challenging part of each lesson. Some curriculum areas will be losing time so the school is looking at extending home learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sanitiser will be used on entry and exit to classrooms and students will wipe desks with anti-bacterial wipes at the start and end of each lesson. • One-way systems in schools with each school considering how their corridor culture will be enforced. • Form time and registration will be in the room where students have their first lesson and will be run by the first lesson's teacher. NS advised that at Portsmouth, morning registration for KS3 will be in the classroom where students have their first lesson but for KS4 the form tutors will have to move around to where the students are. PSHE lessons will be taken by the form tutors. • Track and Trace – if a student tests positive they will isolate for 14 days along with any student who has sat within 1m of that student within the last week (or come within 1m of that student during shared social time). If there are two or more positive cases within a year group, the whole year group will isolate. • Break times will be staggered and will be managed individually by each school. LM has been working with Chartwells on a simple (but nutritionally compliant) Grab and Go menu. The focus will be on fast access whilst ensuring that Chartwells have the staffing capacity to enable this. SGa thanked GB, MG and NS and the timetablers for all their hard work developing the timetable under the challenging logistics. MG advised that the timetable was still under development but would look something like: 8.30am Form time 		
--	--	--	--	--

		<p>9.00am Period 1 with a 20 minute break 11.00am Period 2 with a staggered 40 minute lunch break 1.20pm Period 3 (including registration)</p> <p>Pupils will leave school at the same time but at different points. GB advised that they were currently looking at travel arrangements for Victory students who study subjects at Holcombe. SGa asked about sixth form study periods. GB replied that Years 12 and 13 would be treated as one bubble as they use the same study space. Schools will try to make additional rooms available around the sixth form study spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGa asked about students’ mental health well-being. MG replied that reintegration protocols are currently being developed to support students who are worried about returning to school. Strategies will include measures such as students coming into school outside of school hours to tour the school and re-familiarise themselves with the school so that they feel more comfortable. The recovery curriculum will also include “Time to Talk” during form periods to enable teachers to identify concerns amongst students. • LM commented that the secondary school model is reliant on space so RGS will face a particular challenge due to the delay to the building works and no access to the sports hall. Plans are being considered on how to mitigate this including erecting a marquee over the astroturf to create an additional indoor space. • DL asked about plans in Oct/Nov for students wishing to sit GSCE and A Level exams. SGa replied that the focus was currently on reopening schools in September; plans for Oct/Nov exams would be largely dependent on numbers of students wishing to take those exams. MG advised that the schools’ standard operating procedures have been revised so that schools will check with each student on the two results days to get initial feedback on whether they will be looking to sit exams. • IM asked what “typical” reopening looked like for the secondary schools outside the Trust. SGa replied that the typical model in other schools was for students to be based in the same place (in year group zones) and for teachers to move around to those zones. The Trust was of the view that there would be an educational cost to this model as students wouldn’t be able to access speciality curriculum areas such as science labs and DT rooms. The Trust model also ensured parity of safety for all the students – if students all stayed in one place, any infection would put the children within that place at a greater risk; the Trust model created safe rooms for children with a greater degree of cleaning control which would minimise the potential for transmission. The teachers would also be safer as they wouldn’t be moving around the school. The Trust’s model therefore fitted in with the Child First, Child Safe, Adult Safe principle. • GB spoke about the catch-up curriculum. Headteachers had met and discussed the main areas of catch-up that would be needed for the exam year groups. They had looked at the skills as well as the knowledge that students will need to pick up. Subject leader groups had been set up to work together across the Trust and plans were in place for September. 		
--	--	--	--	--

		<p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGa briefed the Board on the communications timeline including ratification of plans by Trade Unions, AABs and RGBs and communications to parents. <p>The Chair thanked Mr Gardner for his detailed presentation on the practical plans for September reopening and thanked the Executive Team for all their hard work.</p> <p>DM proposed that the Board approve the plans as presented. LT seconded the proposal. The Board unanimously approved the plans.</p>		
5.	Reports from committees	<p><u>Staffing Pay & PM committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair asked how the 2.7% absence rate compared to other Trusts. SGa replied that it was below the average for the sector. • The committee had recommended the renewal of the TES contract. MB proposed. SGe seconded. The recommendation was approved. <p><u>Operations committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GN advised that the committee had approved the RGS site expansion and asked if there was an update on potential part-funding by the LA. LM replied that they were still awaiting a decision. • GN thanked all the Central teams for their help in preparing for the reopening of the schools. • The committee had recommended that the Board ratify the Procurement Policy. IM proposed. LT seconded. The recommendation was approved. <p><u>Finance committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019/20 update <div data-bbox="593 1236 1780 1396" style="background-color: black; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>		

• Budget 2020/21 – overview

[Redacted text block]

• Budget 2020/21 – Chatham hub

[Redacted text block]

• Budget 2020/21 – Strood hub

[Redacted text block]

• Budget 2020/21 – Kent hub

[Redacted text block]

[REDACTED]

- Budget 2020/21 – Fratton hub

- [REDACTED]

- Budget 2020/21 – Portsmouth hub

- [REDACTED]

- Budget 2020/21 – Central

- [REDACTED]

- Budget 2020/21 – summary

- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Audit committee

- GN advised the Board that the committee had approved the external audit plan and fees. However, due to a new FRC standard, the Trust’s auditors UHY were unable to continue providing internal audit so the Trust would need to appoint a new internal auditor by the end of the year.

Governance and Compliance committee

- MB advised that the committee had received a positive compliance tracker report, albeit

		<p>Governors needed to be reminded about keeping training up-to-date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee was concerned that the New Horizons AAB still had no Chair. MB had been liaising with KD and MG. JM was pleased to notify the Board that Lee Round was planning to return as Chair. • LM informed the Board that the report had just been received for the recent ICO mock audit to assess GDPR and data protection within the Trust. The report had been very positive. The Board expressed its thanks to KD. <p><u>Regional Governing Bodies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board was presented with the Risks, Opportunities and Concerns from all RGBs and a discussion was held and points noted. • One concern from the Portsmouth RGB requested a response from the Board and SGA explained that a full review had been completed by the Director of Education and Executive Head on what had been learnt from the recent situation regarding leadership cover at Moorings Way and a plan had been agreed as to how a similar situation would be treated differently in future. KD will respond to the RGB. • DM informed the Board that the Strood RGB had wished to raise a concern around the missed learning opportunities by students during the Covid-19 pandemic. • GN raised a concern around a number of Governors not completing their safeguarding training. KD has contacted those Governors and set a deadline for completion by 21st Sept. 		
6.	Company Secretary report	<p>LM advised the Board of the following RGB Governor changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent RGB – David Day, a former NLE teacher who had worked with the Trust previously, would be joining the Kent RGB as well as Jane Billing currently serving on the Goodwin AAB. • Fratton RGB – Lee Trimby would unfortunately be leaving the Trust Board but would be joining Fratton RGB as a Governor. The Chair extended the Board’s thanks to LT for his hard work and contribution to the Trust Board. • Portsmouth RGB – Julie Spurgeon would be rejoining the Portsmouth RGB. 		
7.	Chair and Vice Chair appointment	<p>DM proposed that Peter Martin continue as Chair. MB seconded. The Board approved the appointment.</p> <p>The Chair recommended Gerard Newman as Vice-Chair. DM proposed. MB seconded. The Board approved the appointment.</p>		
8.	Communication to RGB and AAB	<p>The Board agreed that the CEO’s presentation should be forwarded to the AABs and RGBs to enable Governors to review and challenge schools on the implementation of the plans and</p>		

		the overarching principles.		
9.	Any other business and correspondence to the Chair	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p><u>RGB Chairs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair asked Board members for their views around inviting RGB Chairs to attend Board meetings as observers without any voting rights. All agreed that this would be a positive move and that their input would be valuable. KD will contact the RGB Chairs accordingly. 		
10.	Items for next agenda	[REDACTED]		
11.	Date of next meeting	<p>The next scheduled meeting had been for October. The Board agreed to hold a meeting for the last week in August to receive an update on plans for September reopening. KD will arrange.</p> <p>The Chair thanked SGa for his clear and detailed presentation. He also thanked Board members for their attendance and input. The meeting closed at 7.28pm.</p>		